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➤GENERAL NOTES.◀

Jotham's Fable.—The oldest fable of which we have any trace is that of Jotham, recorded in Judg. ix., 7-20. The trees are represented as going forth to choose and anoint a king. They invite the olive, the fig-tree, and the vine to come and reign over them, but these all decline, and urge that their own natural purpose and products require all their care. Then the trees invite the bramble, which does not refuse, but, in biting irony, insists that all the trees shall come and take refuge under its shadow! Let the olive-tree, and the fig-tree, and the vine come under the protecting shade of the briar! But if not, it is significantly added, "Let fire go out from the bramble and devour the cedars of the Lebanon." The miserable, worthless bramble, utterly unfit to shade even the smallest shrub, might, nevertheless, well serve to kindle a fire that would quickly devour the noblest of trees. So Jotham, in giving an immediate application of his fable, predicts that the weak and worthless Abimelech, whom the men of Shechem had been so fast to make king over them, would prove an accursed torch to burn their noblest leaders. All this imagery of trees walking and talking is at once seen to be purely fanciful. It has no foundation in fact, and yet it represents a vivid and impressive picture of the political follies of mankind in accepting the leadership of such worthless characters as Abimelech.—*From Terry's Biblical Hermeneutics.*

Characteristics of the Chokma.—The tendency of the age of Solomon in relation to the tendency of that of David, may be compared to the tendency of Alexandrian Judaism in relation to that of the Palestinian. It is directed to the human, the ideal and the universal elements in Israel's religion and history, and connects the essence of the Israelitish religion with the elements of truth in heathenism. As knowledge (*gnosis*) goes forth from faith (*pistis*), so the age of Solomon is the new age of wisdom (*chokma*), which has gone forth from the age of David. While prophecy serves the process of redemptive history, *chokma* hastens on before it, and anticipates the universal ideas, through which the adaptation of the religion of Jehovah to become the religion of the world is recognized. The Book of Proverbs, the Book of Job, and Solomon's Song are products of this intellectual, and, to a certain degree, philosophical tendency. In the Book of Proverbs the name of Israel nowhere occurs, but that of man (*adam*) is found all the more frequently. The hero of the Book of Job is a personal and actual proof of the grace which is also active outside of Israel, and the entire book is a protest against the legal pride of orthodox Phariseism, which, having run fast into the dogma of retribution, is not able to keep sin and suffering apart. And Solomon's Song is a circle of dramatic pictures which place before our eyes the love of man and woman in its monogamous and divinely sanctified ideality. All these three books treat of the relation of man, as such, to God and man. From this we perceive how little there is that is specifically Israelitic in the Solomonic literature.

We see the preparation for this largeness of heart, and for the removal of the husk of nationality from humanity in the Psalms; for (1) in them the desire is expressed in many ways that the heathen may be drawn into the fellowship of salvation; and (2) in them the ceremonial of the Tora is already broken in pieces, so that the spirit does not recognize it at all except as symbolic. Samuel gave expres-